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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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PROJECT FIND

PROCUREMENT SECTION CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

Search Out, Inform, and Assist. The nutritional problems of the elderly are complex and defy easy solutions. Government and private agencies have joined in an imaginative and creative program that promises to be an effective means of helping to meet these problems. So, Project FIND is underway. Through cooperative efforts of the White House Conference on Aging, the Social Security Administration, the Office of Economic Opportunity, ACTION, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the American Red Cross, a nationwide search is being made for elderly persons who need food help and who are eligible for the USDA-administered Food Stamp and Food Distribution programs. A message on the food assistance programs and a franked response card are being enclosed with the 28 million Social Security checks mailed in August. Senior citizens who are interested are invited to visit their local officials who certify eligibility for the food programs or to mail back the response card. Some 50,000 volunteers, trained by the Red Cross, will call on those who return the cards to provide them with more details on eligibility and participation. ACTION, the citizen service corps, is providing project management and information services. For more information on Project FIND, contact Mary Tierney, ACTION, 806 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20525. Persons who are interested in participating as a Project FIND volunteer should contact their local Red Cross Office.

GETTING READY FOR SPRING

In The Fall. For many people, the appearance of tulips, crocus, hyacinths, and the other spring flowering bulbs means that Spring has arrived -- even though the calendar says it hasn't. Happily, these are hardy plants that require little care for all the pleasure and color they bring. In most areas, spring flowering bulbs should be planted in the fall -- September into November -- so roots can develop before the ground freezes. Information on specific planting times for popular, as well as some of the lesser known, spring flowering bulbs, on the selection and care of the bulbs, and on forcing is given in a USDA bulletin, "Spring Flowering Bulbs," (G-136. It also includes illustrated guides for planting depth and expected flowering heights of tulip varieties and some of the minor bulbs. Copies of the bulletin are available for 15 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.



DELICIOUS SOUVENIRS OF SUMMER

Jellies, Jams, and Preserves. About the only thing more appetizing than a jar of shimmering fruit jelly is a hot biscuit topped with a lump of shimmering jelly -- or jam -- or preserves. In addition to the common trait of being the delicious results of summer harvests, all these products are basically alike. They all require four essential ingredients: proper amounts of fruit, acid, pectin, and sugar. Most of them also provide a good way to use fruit not at its best for canning or freezing -- the largest or the smallest fruits and berries and those that are irregularly shaped. Jellies, jams, and preserves are not the world's most difficult foods to make, but high quality jellied fruit products depend on so many complex factors that success cannot be guaranteed every time. The surest way to success is to use recipes from a reliable source and follow directions accurately. USDA's popular booklet, "How To Make Jellies, Jams, and Preserves At Home," (G-56) is a handy reference for jelly, jam, and preserve makers. It includes recipes for a variety of fruits and tips on equipment and on storing. One section answers questions commonly asked by homemakers who have had unsatisfactory results in making jellied products: For example, what makes jelly cloudy -- or too soft -- or too firm? Why does fruit float in jam? Copies of the booklet are for sale from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 for 20 cents each.

CONSUMER PRODUCTS BY DESIGN

New Research Report. Permanent-press woollens, instant orange crystals, thornless blackberries and walls without mortar joints are a few of the recent achievements of agricultural research described in a new USDA bulletin, "Consumer Products By Design" (AIB 355). The 71-page report, illustrated in color, shows how studies by the Department's Agricultural Research Service are aiding farmers with better means of producing food and fiber as well as giving consumers a host of new and improved products. It tells of the many new processed foods developed in ARS laboratories, how natural foods such as beef and lettuce are being improved, and how innovations in treatment of wool, cotton, and leather have increased their versatility and consumer appeal. The publication is of particular interest as background information for consumer writers and editors, teachers, and others reporting to consumers. Copies of "Consumer Products By Design" are available for \$1.25 each from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

USDA PROGRAMS SERVE SENIOR CITIZENS

Leaflet Illuminates. In a Special Message to Congress on Aging, President Nixon outlined two goals relating to USDA programs: To reduce hunger among older Americans and to increase opportunities for them to lead independent, dignified lives in their own homes. Two USDA agencies, the Food and Nutrition Service and the Farmers Home Administration, offer programs which can contribute to an improved quality of life for older Americans. Some needy elderly do not know about these programs or how to use them; some public and private agencies do not yet know how they can share in them. If you are among the more than 20 million Americans who are 65 and over, or if you work in projects involving senior citizens, the leaflet, "Food and Housing For The Elderly," enclosed with the August issue of SERVICE should be of interest to you. You will find brief descriptions of the USDA programs and directions on how to obtain additional information on each one. The leaflets are available in limited quantities on a first-come, first-serve basis from SERVICE, Room 461-A, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

IT'S REALLY BIG

The \$130 Billion Food Assembly Line. Every year, about 1,500 pounds of food per person roll off the Nation's food assembly line -- reaching from farmers through processors, shippers, food brokers, wholesalers, retailers, restaurants to consumers. With total goods and services valued at \$130 billion and employing 13 million workers -- including farmers, waiters, truckers, grocery clerks -- the assembly line is the Nation's biggest business. A new USDA slide presentation, "The \$130 Billion Food Assembly Line," is designed to help consumers understand the vastness and efficiency of their food pipeline and the people who manage it. It tells such things as how much land is used to produce crops and livestock, the value of these products, and how many people farm the land. The color slide presentation, also available as a 47-frame filmstrip, is illustrated in an attractive modern art style and carries the narration with music on a cassette for automatic slide changing. The slide set can be ordered for \$13.00 from the Photography Division, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. The filmstrip is available for \$5.50 from Photo Lab, Inc., 3825 Georgia Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20011. The cassette is available from either source for \$3.00.

AMERICA'S SMALL TOWNS

Nostalgia Or Development? Many rural communities are alive and well and thriving in America. True, some small towns and the wonderful quality of life they offer are threatened. But becoming only a memory is not the necessary conclusion. "What Do You Want?," a new motion picture presented by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative Extension Service of New Mexico State University, explores things that some people are doing to keep their towns alive and help them grow. It points out that dedicated people from all walks of life can come together to create opportunities to promote growth in towns that are dying. In the provocative narration, nationally-known news commentator Chet Huntley emphasizes that the job is not easy. He challenges the viewers to decide what they want and to take action -- through hard work and assistance from the Cooperative Extension Service and other Federal and State agencies. The 16 mm. film is in color and runs for 26½ minutes. It is available for \$245 a print from Bandelier Films, 2001 Gold Street S.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87106. Further information may be obtained from Keith Austin, Cooperative Extension Service, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, N.M. 88001.

LAWN ORDER

Tips For Turf. The lawn is the most important single feature of the home landscape. Yet, there are few features on which so many spend so much time for such relatively little to show for the effort. Practicing a few cardinal principles will help a great deal in achieving a beautiful lawn. A fact sheet, prepared by a research agronomist with the Agricultural Research Service, lists these principles and discusses briefly, but in some detail, their application. One section lists some common causes for poor lawns -- mowing too closely, too much traffic, poorly drained soil -- and suggests possible cures. Information is given on renovating an old lawn and establishing a new one, pointing out that under some circumstances renovation can be more of a job than starting all over again. But whichever your choice, the fact sheet advises that the most favorable season to do either is in late August or early September. Single free copies of the fact sheet, "Suggestions For Fall Lawn Care," may be requested by writing SERVICE, Office of Information, Room 461-A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

SCHOOL LUNCH STUDY

Compares Menu Planning Methods. A study is underway to compare the menu planning system presently used in the National School Lunch Program with a nutrient standard approach. The present system requires schools participating in the school lunch program to follow a "Type A menu pattern" which specifies the amounts of protein-rich food, fruits and vegetables, enriched or whole-grained bread, butter or fortified margarine, and milk served. Use of a nutrient standard would allow the school lunch menus to be based on the Recommended Dietary Allowances established by the National Research Council. This means the menu plan would use specified amounts of nutrients (calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, etc.). Alternatives to the Type A pattern are being considered because the minimum requirements of the Type A menus do not consistently result in menus which meet the National Research Council's dietary allowances for children. Another system may offer greater accuracy. Also, some school lunch leaders believe the Type A pattern places undue limitations on menu flexibility and variety of foods which may be used. A more flexible system could increase acceptability of meals served. The Colorado State University is making the study, scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 1973, under a contract with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

SAFER SLEEPERS

In Fire Retardant Cottons. As of July 29, 1972, all children's sleepwear sold through size 6x must either be flame resistant or be labeled to show that it is not. By July 29, 1973, all sleepwear sold through size 6x must meet the standards of the 1970 Flammable Fabrics Act for flame resistance. These are the first provisions of the Act put into effect that apply to clothing. In April, 1971 flame retardancy standards became effective for carpeting. Fire-retardant treatments for cottons developed over the past several years by scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Service will aid manufacturers in meeting the new regulations, thus helping reduce the toll of 3,000 to 5,000 Americans killed and another 150,000 injured each year as a result of burning fabrics. Although no standards currently exist for hospital garments, work uniforms, and other speciality items, uses of the ARS treatments are rapidly being found for both industry and the consumer: Children's Halloween costumes treated with fire-resistant finishes; suits with built-in flame resistance worn by some firemen and workers in hazardous jobs; a flame-retardant finish for cotton batting, giving this material a new life in the automotive, furniture, and bedding industries; flame retardant cottons used in hospitals for cubicle curtains, thermal blankets, and gowns and sheets in rooms where oxygen is administered. Even better flame-resistant treatments are being developed by ARS researchers, including one that keeps its effectiveness through repeated laundering and drycleaning and has built-in wrinkle and mildew resistance.

PLENTIFUL FOODS LIST

August Offers A Variety. The Plentiful Foods List for August features wheat products. Other foods include nectarines, fresh vegetables, peanuts and peanut products, broiler-fryers, turkeys, and eggs. For September, the Plentiful Foods will be turkeys, peanuts, broiler-fryers, eggs, dry beans, fresh apples, and frozen french fried potatoes.

SERVICE is a monthly newsletter of consumer interest. It is designed for those who report to the individual consumer rather than for mass distribution. For information about items in this issue, write: Lillie Vincent, Editor of Service, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Telephone (202) 447-5437. Please include your zipcode.